Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-153. Cancelled

154. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said labeling means comprises labeled antigen.

155. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said labeling means comprises a non-immobilized labeled antibody, wherein said non-immobilized labeled antibody binds with said antigen at a binding site distinct from a binding site for either (i) said autoantibody or autoantibodies being screened for or (ii) said immobilized antibody or antibodies, whereby in step (d), antigen is allowed to be bound both to said immobilized antibodies and to said non-immobilized antibody.

156. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, further comprising providing a control which provides a positive signal in the presence or absence of the autoantibody or autoantibodies being screened.

157. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 156, wherein the positive control comprises at least one control antibody to the antigen, said control antibody attached to the substrate, wherein said control antibody binds to a site on the antigen distinct from a binding site thereof for the autoantibody or autoantibodies being screened.

158. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said antigen is a thyroid protein.

159. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said antigen is thyroid stimulating hormone receptor.

160. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said antigen is selected from the group consisting of thyroid peroxidase and thyroglobulin.

161. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, further comprising screening for the presence of at least one of thyroid stimulating hormone, thyroxine, tri-iodothyronine and thyroglobulin in said sample of body fluid.

162. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said monitoring comprises observing a colorimetric change dependent on said binding of said autoantibody or autoantibodies with said antigen.

163. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said labeling means is colloidal gold.

164. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said substrate comprises a membrane of nitrocellulose, cellulose acetate or a polyamide.

165. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 211, wherein said substrate comprises an application zone provided upstream of said immobilized antibodies on said substrate, and wherein said mixture is allowed to flow from said application zone along said substrate to said immobilized antibodies.

166. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 165, wherein said application zone contains said source of said antigen, and said mixture is obtained by contacting said sample of body fluid with said antigen in said application zone.

167. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 166, wherein said substrate further comprises at least one non-immobilized antibody to said antigen, wherein said non-immobilized antibody is provided downstream of said antigen source in said application zone.

168. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~screening~~ detecting in a sample of body fluid [[for]] the presence of at least one of first and ~~/ or~~ second autoantibodies to at least one antigen, which method comprises:

(a) providing a first antibody to said antigen, wherein said first antibody is immobilized on a substrate and binds a first binding site of said antigen;

(b) providing a second antibody to said antigen, wherein said second antibody is

(i) labeled to allow detection of autoantibodies when present in said sample,

(ii) binds a second binding site of said antigen and

(iii) is non-immobilized so that said second antibody flows along said substrate according to step (e);

(c) providing a source of said at least one antigen, said antigen comprising a first binding site to which either the first autoantibody or the immobilized antibody binds and a second binding site to which either the second autoantibody or the non-immobilized antibody binds;

(d) contacting said antigen of step (c)[[,]] with said sample of body fluid and simultaneously or successively said non-immobilized antibody, so as to obtain a mixture wherein said antigen binds with said first and / or second autoantibodies present in said sample of body fluid, and / or said non-immobilized antibody;

(e) allowing said mixture obtained in step (d) to flow along said substrate of step (a) to said immobilized antibody; and

(f) monitoring binding of said antigen with either said first and / or second autoantibodies, or said immobilized or non-immobilized antibodies, so as to provide an indication of the presence of said autoantibodies in said sample of body fluid;

wherein said first and / or second autoantibodies when present in said sample ~~being screened~~ respectively bind with said first and second binding sites of said antigen in step (d) so that respective binding of said immobilized and / or non-immobilized antibodies with said first and second binding sites of said antigen is ~~substantially~~ completely or partially inhibited.

169. (Canceled)

170. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, further comprising providing a control which provides a positive signal in the presence or absence of the autoantibody or autoantibodies being screened.

171. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 170, wherein said positive control comprises attaching to the substrate at least one control agent that binds to the at least one non-immobilized antibody.

172. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, wherein said antigen is a thyroid protein.

173. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, wherein said antigen is thyroid stimulating hormone receptor.

174. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, wherein said antigen is selected from the group consisting of thyroid peroxidase and thyroglobulin.

175. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, further comprising screening for the presence of at least one of thyroid stimulating hormone, thyroxine, tri-iodothyronine and thyroglobulin in said sample of body fluid.

176. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, wherein said monitoring comprises observing a colorimetric change dependent on said binding of said autoantibody or autoantibodies with said antigen.

177. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, wherein said labeling means is colloidal gold.

178. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, wherein said substrate comprises a membrane of nitrocellulose, cellulose acetate or a polyamide.

179. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 168, wherein said substrate comprises an application zone provided upstream of said immobilized antibody on said substrate, and wherein said mixture is allowed to flow from said application zone along said substrate to said immobilized antibody.

180. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 179, wherein said application zone contains said source of said antigen, and said mixture is obtained by contacting said sample of body fluid with said antigen in said application zone.

181. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 180, wherein said substrate further comprises the non-immobilized second antibody to said antigen, wherein said non-immobilized second antibody is provided downstream of said antigen source in said application zone.

182-210. (Canceled)

211. (Currently Amended) A method of screening a sample of body fluid for distinct populations of at least first and second autoantibodies which respectively bind first and second distinct binding sites of at least one antigen, which method comprises:

(a) providing at least first and second antibodies to said antigen, wherein said first antibody is immobilized at a first position on a substrate and said second antibody ~~are~~ is immobilized at a second position on ~~a~~ said substrate and said first and second antibodies respectively bind first and second distinct binding sites of said antigen;

(b) providing a source of said at least one antigen, the antigen comprising a first binding site to which either said first autoantibody or said first immobilized antibody binds, and a second binding site to which either said second autoantibody or said second immobilized antibody binds[[;]], said antigen source being further characterised in that the absence of both said first and second autoantibodies, antigen binds to both said first and second immobilized antibodies;

(c) contacting said antigen of step (b) with said sample of body fluid, so as to obtain a mixture wherein said antigen binds with said first and / or second autoantibodies present in said sample of body fluid;

(d) allowing said mixture obtained in step (c) to flow along said substrate of step (a) to said first and second antibodies immobilized on said substrate;

(e) providing labeling means directly or indirectly to the antigen so as to enable the presence of said autoantibodies in said sample of body fluid to be detected; and

(f) monitoring binding of said antigen with either said first and / or second autoantibodies, or said immobilized antibodies, so as to provide an indication of the presence of said autoantibodies in said sample of body fluid;

wherein said first and / or second autoantibodies, when present in said sample being screened respectively bind with said first and second binding sites of said antigen when a mixture is obtained in step (c), whereby subsequent respective binding of said first and / or second immobilized antibodies with said first and

second binding sites of said antigen in step (d) is ~~substantially~~ completely or partially inhibited, and further characterised in that said first and second immobilized antibodies are provided at discrete first and second positions on said substrate, so that monitoring of binding of both said first and second immobilized antibodies with said antigen at said discrete first and second positions thereby enables detection and identification of said distinct populations of first and / or second autoantibodies when present in said sample of body fluid.

212. (Presently Presented) A method of screening a sample of body fluid for distinct populations of at least first and second autoantibodies which respectively bind at least first and second distinct antigens, which method comprises:

(a) providing at least first and second antibodies to said at least first and second distinct antigens, wherein said first and second antibodies are immobilized on a substrate;

(b) providing one or more sources of said at least first and second distinct antigens, wherein said first antigen comprises a binding site to which either said first autoantibody or said first immobilized antibody binds, and said second antigen comprises a binding site to which either said second autoantibody or said second immobilized antibody binds;

(c) contacting said at least first and second antigens of step (b) with said sample of body fluid, so as to obtain a mixture wherein said first and second antigens respectively bind with said first and / or second autoantibodies when present in said sample of body fluid;

(d) allowing said mixture obtained in step (c) to flow along said substrate of step (a) to said first and second antibodies immobilized to said substrate;

(e) providing labeling means so as to enable the presence of said autoantibodies in said sample of body fluid to be detected; and

(f) monitoring binding of said first and second antigens with either said first and / or second autoantibodies, or said immobilized antibodies, so as to provide an indication of the presence of said autoantibodies in said sample of body fluid;

wherein said first and second autoantibodies when present in said sample being screened bind with said first and second antigens when a mixture is obtained in step (c), whereby subsequent respective binding of said first and / or second immobilized antibodies with said first and second antigens in step (d) is substantially inhibited and further characterised in that said first and second immobilized antibodies are provided at discrete first and second positions on said substrate, so that monitoring of respective binding of both said first and second immobilized antibodies with said first and second antigens at said discrete first and second positions thereby enables detection and identification of said distinct populations of first and / or second autoantibodies when present in said sample of body fluid.

213-216. (Canceled).